

Anxiety in Elementary

Arelis Tapia-Vargas, School Social Worker
Marilu Gregory, School Social Worker and Field Supervisor

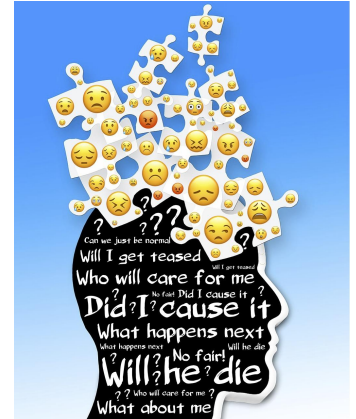
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AGENDA:

- What is Anxiety?
- What Maintains Anxiety?
- Helping Kids Manage Anxiety
- Resources

Anxiety

- Internal sense of worry, dread or fear
- May or may not have a clear cause
- Can be a typical response



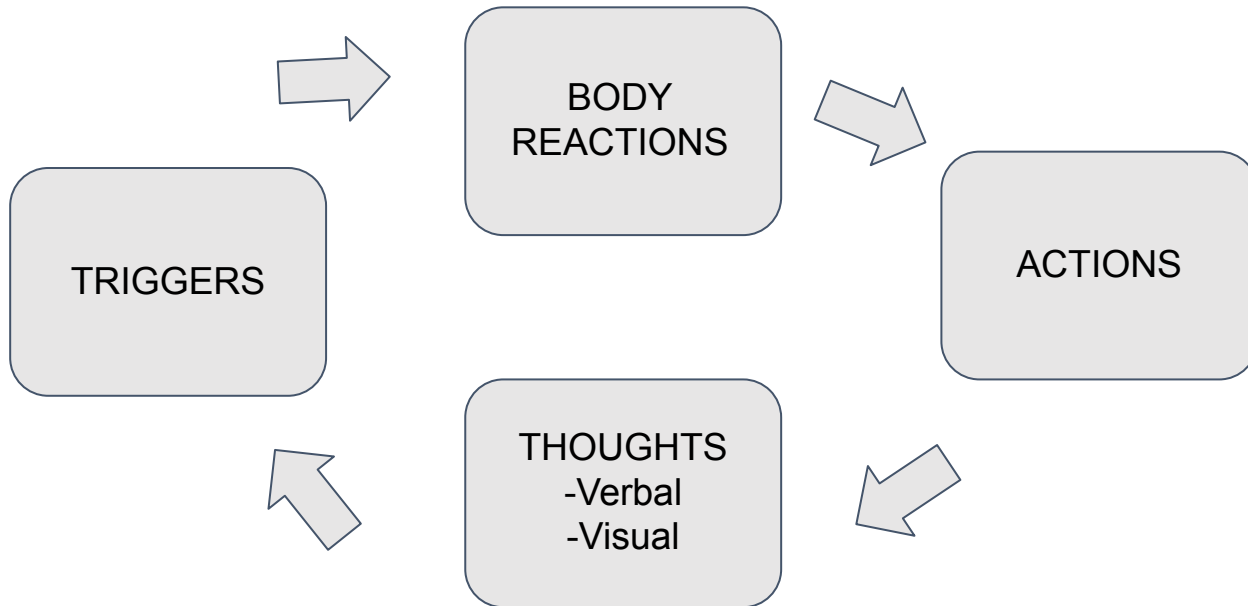
Forms of Anxiety:

- General anxiety/worries
- Phobias
- Panic
- Obsessions
- Compulsions
- Social Anxiety
- Trauma reactions

Common Symptoms

- Expressed fears and worries
- Crying
- Irritability and oppositional behavior
- Silly/goofy behavior or dysregulation
- Antsy/fidgety and difficulty concentrating
- Self-doubt and fearful/clingy behavior
- Sleep disturbance
- Repetitive behaviors, thoughts or questions
- Panic

What Happens When Kids are Anxious?



Common Physical Reactions

- Breathing fast
- Butterflies in stomach
- Needing to go to bathroom
- Wobbly knees
- Tense Muscles
- Crying
- Shakiness
- Stomachache
- Headache

What Maintains Anxiety?

- Allowing or encouraging avoidance
- Thinking errors
- Lack of coping skills
- Excessive reassuring
- “Taking over”
 - Prevents child from developing coping skills

THINKING ERRORS FOR CHILDREN

01



MIND READING

You assume you know what someone else is thinking "They must not like me"

02



FOCUSING ON THE BAD

You ignore all the good and positive things that happen and focus just on the bad things

03



CATASTROPHISING

You think the worst of situations and start experiencing a cycle of negative thoughts "What happens if I fail? What happens if I make a mistake"

04



FORTUNE TELLING

You assume that something bad is going to happen in the future

05



BLAMING YOURSELF

When something goes wrong you tend to blame yourself "It's all my fault"

06



LABELING

You apply a negative label to yourself "I am stupid, I am silly, I am worthless"

07



MINIMISING

You downplay the importance of something until it become insignificant

08



JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

When something happens you immediately jump to a negative conclusion and ignore all other evidence

09



FEELINGS AS FACTS

If you feel something then you believe it "I feel stupid, therefore I am stupid"



@BELIEVEPHQ

- Sleep
- Food
- Exercise/movement



- Building on strengths and interests
- Avoiding overbooking of activities

- Connecting with family, friends, animals, nature, teachers, and other staff members

- Leaving time to “just be a kid”

CALM Strategy for Parents

- **C**atch your breath:
 - Pause to think or withdraw briefly to become calm and plan a response
- **A**cept negative feelings:
 - Wait patiently and respond with “I see” “Hmm, ok”
- **L**abel emotions:
 - “You seem really nervous”, “You seem angry”, Zones of Regulation
- **M**odel coping skills:
 - Show your child how to remain calm and collected

Coping Skills:

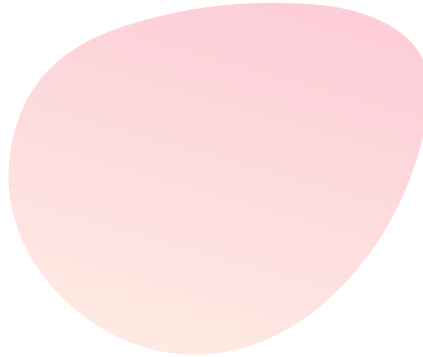
- Ability to calm down physically
- Ability to talk through a situation
- Problem solve and create a Plan B

Body Relaxation Strategies



- Awareness of physical signs of anxiety
- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Visualization

Using Parent Power



- Model brave/encouraging, non-anxious behavior
- Be gentle, yet encouraging
- Pay attention to non-anxious behavior

Collaboration



- Connect with Case Manager and/or Counseling Social Worker
- Updates from/to teacher team
- If medication is involved, discuss with Nurse

Student Support

- Case Managers/Social Workers
- Teachers
- Nurse
- Administrators
- Social Work Interns (**Elementary School Social Work Program**)

When To Seek Professional Help

- Difficulties are severe
- Tried strategies but they don't seem to be working
- Parent-child relationship factors
- Parents' own anxiety

Elementary School Social Work Program

- Counseling services for general education students
- Individual/group with social work intern
- Areas of Focus:
 - Dealing with anxiety
 - Managing feelings
 - Confidence
 - Friendship problems
 - Covid 19 Transitions
 - Peer pressure and bullying
 - Behavioral concerns
 - Loss or family changes
 - Referrals

SCAN QR CODE FOR WEBSITE INFO:



Resources:

- Online:

- [Child Mind Institute - Anxiety Disorders Center](#)
- [Child Mind Institute - Quick Guide to Anxiety in Children](#)
- [Child Mind Institute - What to Do \(and Not Do\) When Children Are Anxious](#)
- [Child Mind Institute - Thinking Errors](#)

- Books:

- Rapee, R.M., Spence, S.H., Cobham, V., & Wignall, A. (2008) [Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents, Second Edition.](#)
- Huebner, Dawn (2008) [What to Do When You Worry Too Much.](#)



Thank You!